SCOTLAND v AUSTRALIA

International Challenge Match • Wednesday 27th March 1996

HAMPDEN

SCOTTISH FOOTBALL agrees FAIR PLAY please!

The National Stadium, Hampden Park, Glasgow
Kick-Off 8pm • Match Programme £1.50

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THE FOOTBALL TRUST
Helping the game

The Football Trust,
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Second time around

I am delighted to extend a very warm welcome on behalf of the Scottish Football Association to everyone present at the National Stadium, Hampden Park, Glasgow, for this evening's International Challenge match with Australia.

This is not the first occasion that tonight's visitors have come to Glasgow for a major international match, although the circumstances of their one and only previous visit were rather different. In 1985 Scotland and Australia met home and away within the space of two weeks in order to contest the final qualifying place for the 1986 World Cup finals in Mexico. A 2-0 victory for Scotland here at Hampden was followed by a 0-0 draw in Melbourne and our place in the 1986 World Cup finals was confirmed. However, anyone who witnessed these matches will recall the difficult obstacle which the Australian team of 1985 presented.

Tonight's visiting squad arrives with a growing reputation, having narrowly missed out on qualification for the 1994 World Cup finals in a play-off against Argentina, and comprising players from leading clubs across Europe. They will undoubtedly provide a good test for Scotland, as Craig Brown assesses his squad in advance of Euro '96. I am pleased, therefore, to have this opportunity to welcome to Scotland our friends from Australia, amongst whom is Scotsman, Eddie Thomson, who manages the team and is returning 'home', albeit briefly. No doubt, Eddie will have had the opportunity to renew many friendships during his short time here.

Our match this evening kicks-off a hectic period of activity for our national team and signals the commencement of Scotland's preparations for Euro '96. Ahead lie matches with Denmark, the United States and Colombia and then the finals tournament itself, with matches against the Netherlands, England and Switzerland scheduled - all on foreign soil. Tonight is, therefore, Scotland's final home match before Euro '96 and I am sure that you will all wish to extend your good wishes to Craig Brown and his players for the tournament

Our quartet of match officials are from the Netherlands, and I am delighted to welcome Mr Herman Van Dijk and his colleagues to Scotland.

Finally, a word of thanks and appreciation to the committee and staff at Queen's Park FC for their assistance in hosting tonight's match and my personal thanks to you, the Scottish supporters, for your continued support of our national team.

Enjoy the match!

BILL DICKIE,
President,
Scottish Football Association.

Acknowledgements

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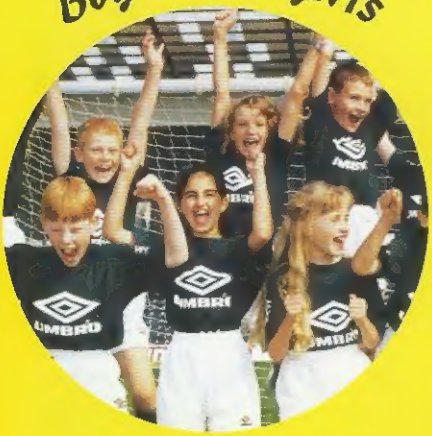
SCOTTISH

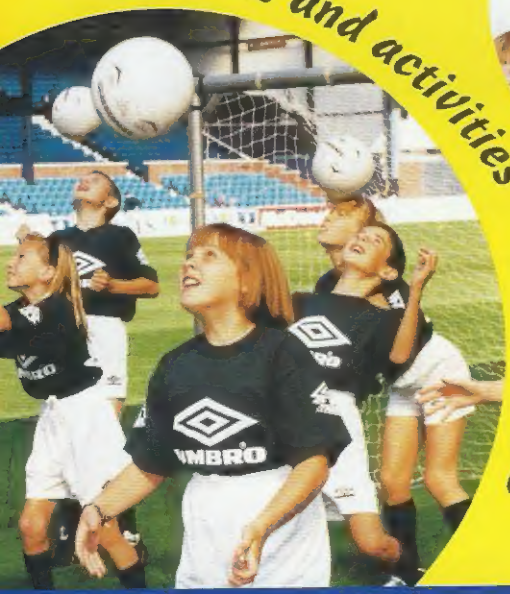
Boys and girls



Fitness and flexibility

Teamwork

Skills and activities



Fun and enjoyment

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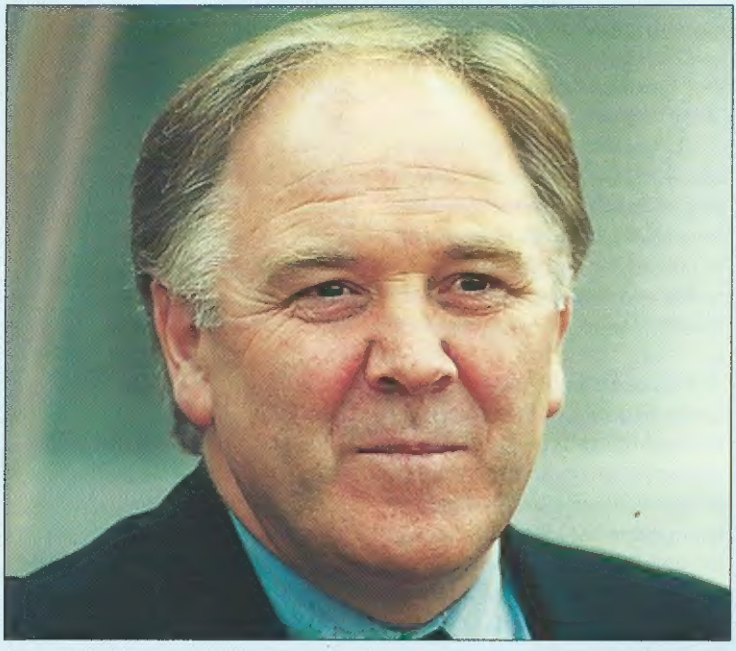
FOOTBALL IS...

...having a BALL

Craig Brown

A meeting by chance!



Dear Fellow Supporter.
A chance meeting with Australian coach, Eddie Thomson, at the World Cup draw in Paris last December, was the catalyst for this match tonight. Eddie was commenting on the fine quality of his current side, most of whom come from Europe, and we discussed that we play a friendly match at our National Stadium. There was spontaneous agreement and the result is our meeting this evening.

I remember Eddie Thomson well as an outstanding, 'no-nonsense' centre-half with Aberdeen and Hearts. He was a tough guy, but he was not short of technical ability. However, the hallmark of his play was his motivational ability and this, together with his fervent desire to win, are qualities which he has taken into management. Eddie was in my group during one of his many visits to our Coaching Courses at Largs, and he was an excellent practitioner with very definite ideas on how his teams should play.

One thing is certain – we will see an extremely well-organised Australian team here tonight. Looking at the quality of players in the squad, it is apparent that there is an abundance of talent, all but Tony Popovic and Alex Tobin playing in Europe, at Eddie's disposal. It should be a major test for us, our last home match before we compete in Euro '96 in England.

Having qualified from a difficult group, we feel cautiously optimistic that we can do well in the Championship finals. At our recent two-day gathering, when 30 players assembled, Alex Miller and I detected a genuine desire on the part of everyone to be included in our final selection. Tonight is one of the few remaining opportunities for the players to confirm their capabilities and so guarantee their selection.

With many domestic competitions, both north and south of the border, being so closely contested, our international players have heavy club commitments, but there is no lack of real enthusiasm to play for their country. This has been the key feature in the relative success which we have achieved. The resounding final home victory over San Marino was followed by a decent performance in Sweden where, although we experimented a little with the team selection, we did create enough chances to have scored several 'away' goals.

Tonight is the start of an important build-up for the forthcoming adventure in England. Next month we are off to Copenhagen to play an 'A' and 'B' match before we name our final pool of players for our two matches in the USA. Meanwhile, our Under-21 side, under the expert guidance of Tommy Craig and Alex McLeish, is competing well in the quarter-finals of the European Championship (I just hope that last night's result has seen us through to the semis!). So it is all systems 'Go' for the next few months.

This is the way we like things to be, so everyone will be working flat out to give our magnificent support a summer which is richly deserved.

Thanks again for your encouragement . . . I have never known such goodwill towards our teams from all sectors of Scottish society. I've visited many establishments – schools, youth clubs, sports centres, churches, prisons, oil rigs . . . as well as most of the senior grounds in Scotland, and everywhere I go I am met with expressions of genuine support and goodwill.

Thanks, everyone, for your encouragement and for your continued support.

CRAIG BROWN
International Team Manager

The countdown starts now

Eddie Thomson – guarantee of a good work-out

Scotland's build-up to the European Championship finals in England this summer begins with Australia's visit to Hampden tonight. Or did it start over coffee and croissants in Paris back in December?

SFA President, Bill Dickie, and Craig Brown shared a breakfast table with the Australians' Scottish manager, Eddie Thomson, the morning after the World Cup draw had been made in the French capital those three months ago.

Thomson, the former Hearts and Aberdeen player, declared his desperation to arrange a friendly as soon as possible for the purpose of assessing his many European-based players before they launched into their Oceanic qualifying group.

Messrs Dickie and Brown admitted that Scotland had a spare date in March, but pointed out that they would have to consult back at Park Gardens before any decision on filling it could be taken.

"I was down on my hands and knees pleading for a match and gave my guarantee that we would give Scotland a good work-out as they began preparing for Euro '96," Thomson recalled.

"I even chased up the offer a couple of times and, fortunately, got the fixture I wanted. We don't have anything like Euro '96 ahead to prepare for the next World Cup qualifying programme, so a match like this is especially important for us."

Scotland have been distracted, somewhat, since that meeting with the man who was a Pittodrie stalwart of the mid-1970s, the European Championship draw being made in Birmingham almost immediately afterwards.

Their fans instantly began to savour the prospect of facing England at Wembley, not to mention the highly-palatable matches with Holland and Switzerland at Villa Park.

But there are a few appetisers on the menu between now and June, including trips to Denmark and the USA which follow on from Australia's long trek to Scotland.

Long trek? Well, it has been for manager Thomson, but not for the great majority of his regular squad who play either in the UK, or on the continent, with Craig Moore of Rangers and Aston Villa's Mark Bosnich being best-known to Scottish supporters.

This mass migration from Australia bears testimony to how football in that part of the southern hemisphere has developed – even since Scotland travelled there for a World Cup play-off in 1985.

We shouldn't forget, either, that the Scots managed only to draw 0-0 in Melbourne, although that result, coupled with a 2-0 win at Hampden, was sufficient to take them to Mexico the following summer.

"We're easily 50 per cent better than we were then," insisted Thomson who, at the time, was assistant to the Australians' manager, Frank Arok. "That team of ours could kick and chase. This one can play.

"One of our top guys is Paul Okon who's with Club Brugge in Belgium. He's Player of the Year over there and turned down PSV Eindhoven and Bayern because it seemed he had some provisional agreement with Lazio.

"The lad, unfortunately, has damaged his cruciate ligaments lately and may not be with us in Glasgow. But we're looking forward to him getting back to fitness before long.

"We also have Ned Zelic, who was with QPR for a time, but is back in Germany with Eintracht Frankfurt. He's been picked for a World XI to play against Brazil so we're talking quality again."

Thomson, who was always the great enthusiast, proceeded to outline other aspects of Australia's growing pedigree, including the facts that their senior team only just failed to beat Argentina to reach the last World Cup, whilst their Olympic side finished fourth in Barcelona.

"The last time we played Scotland, only a couple of our squad were based overseas," Thomson attested. "Now, the great majority of them are. There's the difference. The problem for me, of course, is getting to see them.

"That's why this match at Hampden is so important so far as we are concerned and, as I told

Craig Moore – best known in Scotland

Craig Brown when I met him in Paris, we'll make sure we give Scotland the kind of game they need to get them going for Euro '96."

Australia made it hard enough for the Scots to get to Mexico '86, the two teams having won the right to play-off for the 24th and last remaining place in the World Cup finals of that year.

Scotland, under the temporary stewardship of Alex Ferguson after Jock Stein's death in Cardiff, could sense, in the minutes before a ball was kicked at Hampden, the problems which Australia might present them.

Each of their defenders appeared to be bigger than the other and certainly taller and stronger than the likes of Frank McAvennie who was selected to lead Ferguson's attack.

Scotland, as Thomson reflected, "hardly allowed us out of our own half before the interval" yet almost an hour had elapsed before they claimed the first of the two goals for which Ferguson claimed he would settle.

Kenny Dalglish helped engineer the break-through, knocking the ball through to West Ham's McAvennie, who was fouled on the edge of the penalty box, with Davie Cooper scoring direct from the free-kick.

Scotland's toil provided a second goal within three minutes, Dalglish re-directing Alex McLeish's long clearance into the path of McAvennie who, taking only two touches of the ball, scored superbly.

Ferguson knew that his squad could not afford to underestimate Australia's threat in the return match two weeks later, and much importance was attached to the fact that captain, Graeme Souness, declared his availability.

Souness, in the event, made his own way to Melbourne after playing a Sunday match with Sampdoria and, consequently, had little time to acclimatise himself for the rigours which awaited him in Olympic Park.

It was, in short, a 90-minute slog for the Scots with Jim Leighton making several crucial saves and only Paul McStay and David Speedie threatening to score before the match ended in a relieving 0-0 draw.

Scotland have been reminded, since then, that the fact of qualifying for any major tournament is at least as important as the style and flair which goes into the effort.

Their successful bid to reach Euro '96, for example, was built upon the principles of solid defence allied to sound organisation and thorough preparation.

Yet manager, Craig Brown, would argue, with strong conviction, that they attempted to play good football; right from the outset of the qualifying tournament when they beat Finland in Helsinki with considerable flair.

"Craig Brown has done a good job with Scotland," Australia's Thomson acknowledged. "Maybe they haven't always been that good to watch but they've certainly been effective. It's as if they've come of age.

"They're learning how to win games yet, at the same time, appreciate that a draw sometimes can be a good result. Tactically, they're better than they were before. I watched them against Finland, in Glasgow, and was impressed by their approach."

It remains to be seen whether Thomson is equally impressed this evening. His aspirations lie with his adopted country and their build-up to the next World Cup, but the native Scot in him will be looking for positive signals about the old country's capabilities for the summer.

Thomson, in that sense, is in accord with his counterpart, Brown, who knows that, however hard it was for Scotland to qualify for England, it will be harder still for them to make the desired impression when they get there.

BRIAN SCOTT
(Scottish Daily Mail)

Graeme Souness

"Super Ally" – 50 and not out!

Ally McCoist is likely to become a member of the Scotland Hall of Fame tonight when he joins the select band of players who've reached the half-century of international appearances in dark blue.

Highlights along the way have been many and varied: playing in the 1990 World Cup finals and the European Championships two years later; scoring the goal against Norway which clinched qualification for Italia '90 and the header against Greece which went a long way towards getting Scotland to this summer's Euro finals; an impressive haul of 17 goals in his 49 games.

But on the down side there was the leg break in Lisbon, in April 1993, which cost him 2½ years of his international career.

However, in the McCoist world, there is much more good than bad. And Super Ally was happy to open his international scrapbook before tonight's match to provide his own particularly personal memories of his international career . . . including some things the Tartan Army have NEVER known about!

CAP 1: April 29, 1986
Holland 0 Scotland 0

"My international debut, in a friendly just before the 1986 World Cup. I found myself up against an Ajax defender who would subsequently become a fairly familiar face – Ronald Koeman.

"My main memory of the match is that Robert Connor, who was also making his Scotland debut, had a great game, and that I missed a good chance late on which would've made it a dream debut. However, it wouldn't be the last time I missed a chance in a Scotland jersey . . . "

CAP 7: September 9, 1987
Scotland 2 Hungary 0

"Why do I remember a friendly against the Hungarians? Easy. I scored my first international goals in the victory. My other memories are that two of the guys who used to give me fairly close attention during matches in Scotland, Roy Aitken and Willie Miller, were the first guys to congratulate me on doing so. And I also recall the Hungarian 'keeper, Disztl, had a little goatee beard like Rip Van Winkle!"

CAP 19: November 15, 1989
Scotland 1 Norway 1

"A packed Hampden – almost 64,000 were there to see us clinch our place in the World Cup finals. I scored just on the stroke of half-time and although Norway equalised in the last minute, by that time the Tartan Army were in party mood and were checking the lira exchange rate with the following summer and Italia '90 in mind."

CAP 26: June 20, 1990
Brazil 1 Scotland 0

"Another ambition realised. After coming on as sub against Costa Rica and Sweden, I started a World Cup finals match for the first time. Unfortunately, we didn't do enough to make it to the next stage – and that game had a funny aftermath.

"I came back from Italy to be met at the airport by my pal, Knoxy. We drove to East Kilbride and I'd reached the front door of my flat when I realised my keys were in my wife Allison's handbag. And where was Allison? In Italy, where she'd stayed on to watch some more of the World Cup!"

CAP 39: June 12, 1992
Holland 1 Scotland 0

"I started our first European

Championship game against the Dutch, and found myself up against my old mate, Ronald Koeman. But the real action began after the match.

"Stewart McKimmie and I, along with Koeman and Danny Blind, were chosen for the drug tests. As is normal after games, providing a sample was easier said than done. The Dutch boys started off on bottled water but when they saw us having a Carlsberg, they quickly followed suit. Stewart and I missed our flight to Norrkoping, as the Scottish team travelled right after the match, and had to stay the night in Gothenburg – and I'd love to know what sort of condition the Dutch boys were in when they finally made it back to their base."

CAP 41: June 18, 1992
Scotland 3 C.I.S. 0

"At last we got the result our performances deserved and finally the Tartan Army got something to really sing about. I remember this game because in it I managed to do something very few people can claim to have done – I set up an international goal for Brian McClair!"

CAP 47: August 16, 1995
Scotland 1 Greece 0

"Along with the goal against Norway, this was my most important goal for Scotland, simply because it put us a good way towards this summer's Euro finals. Scoring with my first decent touch is the stuff dreams are made of, and I freely admit, when I saw my header hit the net, I lost it a bit, and was off jumping the advertising boards in a style which makes me glad that FIFA's recommendations about the manner of celebrating goals emerged some months later.

"What you might not know is that when I was warming-up behind the goal before going on, I told Billy McKinlay that when I went on and scored – it won't surprise you to learn that yes, I was THAT confident – I would go to the end of the advertising boards and crawl along inside them before emerging at the other end!

"But fear not – I'm keeping that one for our Wembley winner in June!!!"

Yet despite McCoist's easy-going nature, his love of pulling on an international jersey and his determination to do well for his country is apparent in the dining-room of his Renfrewshire home. There he keeps the mementoes of a distinguished career – and his international caps and jerseys figure among them.

He says, "I actually had a lot of my jerseys from earlier internationals stolen in a break-in a few years ago, which really disappointed me. But I've still managed to swap shirts with some of the biggest names in world football over the years. I've got shirts worn by Dennis Bergkamp, Jurgen Kohler, and Franco Baresi. The depressing thing about Baresi's is that while he got a sweat-soaked Scotland number 9, I got a Italian number 6 in return which was not only bone-dry but still smelled of his after-shave!

"I might seem like someone who takes life as it comes, and to some extent I do, but representing my country is a big thing for me. Having stood on the Hampden terraces as a kid watching Scotland, being out there playing isn't something I take casually at all.

"That's part of the reason why I was on cloud nine after scoring against Greece last year. The thought that I'd end my Scotland career on the twin lows of breaking my leg in Lisbon at the end of a 5-0 defeat wasn't the way I wanted things to come to a halt.

"I never thought that WOULD be the end, though. I probably should have, because most guys of 32 who hadn't played for two years would look upon their international days as over. But that was never my style and I always felt if I was fit and scoring for Rangers, I'd get more opportunities to play for Scotland. I've been lucky enough for it to have turned out that way.

"If I'm involved tonight, then clocking up 50 caps would be another great honour for me. Not many guys have done it and I'll be proud to join them. There are some things I never get tired of doing. Scoring goals is one – pulling on a Scotland jersey is another. And these upstart strikers who keep turning up in squads should know that I intend to keep doing it for a LONG time to come.'

KENNY McDONALD
(News of the World)

Franco Baresi – a bone-dry shirt

The other competing nations in Euro '96

In the eyes of the Tartan Army and the Scottish nation at large the clash with the English at Wembley on June 15 is THE BIG ONE in the opening phase of Euro '96.

But when Europe's top 16 come to England this summer for the finals of the European Championships, the qualifying rounds are littered with an array of mouth watering spectaculars.

And they don't come any bigger than the mighty confrontation between Italy and Germany, the last tie in Group C being staged at Old Trafford on June 19, 24 hours after the Scots Group A finale against Switzerland at Villa Park, Birmingham.

Little wonder the bookmakers could not separate Europe's big two – Germany rated at 11/10 to top their group with the Italians given odds of 6/5 – when the draw was made at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham on December 15.

Lothar Matthaus

Just look at the array of talent in both camps. The Germans, three times World Champions and kings of Europe in 1972 and 1980, are managed by that terrier defender, Berti Vogts, World Cup winner in 1974 who went on to win 96 international caps and, in 14 years with Borussia Monchengladbach won five national championships and two UEFA Cups.

They threaten again with Andreas Kopke of Eintracht Frankfurt in goal and any defence that can boast the talent of the 122 times capped, Lothar Matthaus of Bayern Munich, his two mates, Markus Babbel and Thomas Helmer, plus the trio of Jurgen Kohler, Stefan Reuter and Matthias Sammer from Borussia Dortmund, will take some beating.

In the middle of the park the choice for Vogts ranges from 68 times capped Thomas Hassler of Karlsruhe to Andreas Moller of Dortmund and Thomas Strunz of Bayern Munich.

Ace striker, Ulf Kirsten, 49 times capped by the former East Germany before joining the unified team, has competition from the great Jurgen Klinsmann, back at Munich after a spell with Spurs, Heiko Herrlich and his Dortmund partner, Karlheinz Riedle.

In the Italian line-up there is star quality to match, with national coach, Arrigo Sacchi, still at the helm after the disappointment of the World Cup finals in America.

The Italians are looking for new super star, Alessandro Del Piero of Juventus – he destroyed Rangers in the Champions League – to grab the Euro stage where he will have the likes of Lazio hit-man, Pierluigi Casiraghi, Gianfranco Zola of Parma and Marco Simone all vying for front-line recognition . . . and do not forget Del Piero's team-mate, Fabrizio Ravanelli.

Alessandro Del Piero

The whole side oozes talent with Milan's Demetrio Albertini a key man in the middle of the park alongside Dino Baggio, Massimo Crippa and Roberto Di Matteo.

They are equally powerful at the back where the 67 times capped Paulo Maldini is sure to feature alongside Milan's Alessandro Costacurta and Ciro Ferraro of Juventus.

In this same group lurks the Russians, a favoured force for Euro '96 in many quarters. They topped Scotland's group in the qualifying and coach, Oleg Romantsev, has moulded together a well drilled, highly competent outfit with Andrei Kanchelskis, now with Everton, back in the fold.

Paulo Sousa

Holders, Denmark are in Group D and their progress will take a fresh impetus among the Scots now that Brian Laudrup and, more recently, Erik Bo Andersen are playing for Rangers. Goalkeeper, Pieter Schmeichel of Manchester United, has now won more than 80 caps for his country and their opening tie against Portugal at Hillsborough, the home of Sheffield Wednesday could well be decisive in that section.

The Portuguese record in the Euro finals is disappointing by their standards – only once have they got beyond the first phase in the last 20 years and that was in 1984 when they reached the last four. Rui Coasta and Paulo Sousa, both playing in Italy with Fiorentina and Juventus respectively, as top-notch midfield entertainers with the FC Porto pairing of Rui Barros and Oliveira Domingos among their leading marksmen.

In Group B, the place to be for the most exicting clash of all is Elland Road, Leeds, on June 15 – the day of the Scotland v England clash – for the high powered confrontation between France and Spain.

France, the hosts of the 1998 World Cup finals, were crowned champions of Europe in 1984 and national coach, Aime Jacquet, the respected midfielder with Saint-Etienne and Lyon, wants to make a major impact.

Auxerre's Laurent Blanc is his most experienced defender, capped more than 40 times, with Jocelyn Angloma of Torino and Alain Roche of Paris St Germain formidable opponents.

Didier Deschamps and Marcel Desailly, both playing in Italy, are the vital cogs in the midfield machine, but it looks likely there will be no Eric Cantona up front and it remains to be seen if the great Jean Pierre Papin will play.

Spain, at their best, are a match for any nation but all too often fail to produce the expected results on the big occasion. Their leading marksman is Salinas of Sporting Gijon with 22 goals in 54 appearances, the only striker in their squad in double figures.

In this same group are the menacing duo of Bulgaria and Romania. The Romanians have many exciting players headed by Gheorghe Hagi and Angelo Ioan Lupescu with almost 150 caps between them and, up front, Marius Lacatus has been an outstanding servant.

Didier Deschamps

These two teams meet head on at St James' Park on June 13. The Bulgarian squad is packed with seasoned campaigners headed by Hristo Stoitchkov, Nasko Sirakov and Luboslav Penev with Krassimir Balakov their midfield play-maker.

JIM McLEAN
(Scottish Daily Express)

Hristo Stoitchkov

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Scotland's Euro '96 opponents

ENGLAND

England appear to enjoy every advantage as they look forward to a European Championship held in their own country. There has been a vast number of candidates from which to construct a squad and a lengthy period to groom them. As hosts, England were exempt from qualifying for Euro '96 and have not played a competitive match since 17 November 1993.

In many ways, however, the coach, Terry Venables, may feel that he has had a surfeit of time and resources. Other managers before him have encountered grave difficulties when the normal pressures have been taken from their teams. Recently, for example, Germany were handicapped by the fact that they took their place at the 1994 World Cup finals, by rights, as reigning champions.

With no competitive fixtures beforehand, the side never looked to have the competitive edge to defend their title in America, and eventually suffered a surprising defeat by Bulgaria in the quarter-finals. England's circumstances are even more difficult. That last 'competitive' fixture, in November 1993, came in a World Cup qualifier against San Marino on the night when it was confirmed that the team would not be going to the World Cup finals.

Robbie Fowler – prolific goal scorer

The failure produced anguish and recriminations in English football and, worse still, there were no major matches on the horizon in which the disappointment could be shed. Instead, Venables, who replaced Graham Taylor in January 1994, has so far had 15 friendlies to develop his plans.

The outcome of such games never can be really satisfying. When England lose one, Venables can expect howls of complaint, but the victories hardly seem to merit much celebration. For the coach, these matches are, as politicians would say, fact-finding missions. The extent of his research has been extraordinary.

In Venables' quest for the right blend, men with sound reputations at club level who had never before been considered for international service, such as Kevin Richardson and Barry Venison, have been capped. Even now, the coach has not yet been able to study all the candidates for the team and the current clamour has come from those who still wait to see the prolific Robbie Fowler of Liverpool given his chance.

With so many options, it will require all Venables' experience to decide who should represent England this summer. His convictions about the style of the team have been firm. Venables will not accept the standard 4-4-2 system that has failed English club sides in European competition, and perseveres with a formation using just one outright forward.

Adapting to tactics can be difficult and Alan Shearer, easily the most effective striker in the Premiership, has not scored for his country since September 1994. Results have also been uneven, with the 3-1 defeat by Brazil at Wembley in June of last year, a particularly humbling reminder of the standards set by the leading nations.

For Venables, who has stated he will step down as coach after the European Championship, only June's events are truly significant, however. With just a matter of weeks remaining he has reached the point where decisions must be made. Some players' importance to him has begun to become apparent and experienced men such as Arsenal's goalkeeper, David Seaman and the centre-half, Tony Adams, seem essential to Venables' plans.

At right-back the Manchester United youngster, Gary Neville has become a regular choice. With midfield in mind, Venables must be heartened to see an injury-free Paul Gascoigne playing impressively for Rangers. That area of the pitch, however, may also make the coach worry. It already looks likely that Graeme le Saux will miss the European Championship and Darren Anderton is struggling to be ready in time.

In addition, David Platt has had a difficult season with Arsenal since

returning to England from Sampdoria, while newcomers such as Steve Stone, of Nottingham Forest, have made unexpectedly strong bids for a place in Venables' team. With Teddy Sheringham and Les Ferdinand around, as well as Shearer, there are also delicate judgments to be made in attack.

Circumstances were very similar before the World Cup of 1966, but, in the tournament itself, Alf Ramsey, later knighted, quickly assembled a line-up good enough to win the trophy. If Venables proves as shrewd as his famous predecessor, England will be formidable this summer.

HOLLAND

We are all in the habit of regarding Holland as the great high-flyers of European football, but it is not really so long ago that they were in the depths of despair. In June of last year, their manager, Guus Hiddink stood with his team in Minsk Airport, pondering the 'embarrassment' of the 1-0 defeat Belarus had just inflicted upon them and wondering whether a place at the European Championship finals was now out of reach.

Hiddink was almost angry when a journalist told him that their group rivals, the Czech Republic, had just lost in Luxembourg, because he could only assume the man was indulging in a misplaced attempt at humour. It took a while before he was persuaded that such a bizarre result had really occurred. The qualifiers were like that for Holland, full of fear and worry over other matches.

In the end, Hiddink's side only kept their hopes alive by scraping into second place in their group, behind the Czech Republic and only just ahead of Norway. Even then, they were one of the two runners-up with the worst records and so had to enter a play-off. It is the great irony of the season that

Patrick Kluivert – worries ahead

the match in question, against the Republic of Ireland at Anfield, in December, should bring them such acclaim.

The performance in the 2-0 win certainly was majestic and no-one could doubt that it was constructed by some of the finest players in Europe. All the same, it was curious that most people forgot they were watching a team that only just avoided finishing amongst the also-rans. The Dutch national team is usually fascinating, but in addition to the sophisticated play for which it is famed, there is also a tradition of fallibility.

At the World Cups of 1990 and 1994, as well as the 1992 European Championship, performances have been surprisingly muted. Accordingly, Hiddink has a certain amount of work to do in re-establishing Holland's reputation. While the country is admired for its approach to the game, he must prove that the style can be effective in matches against the battle-hardened nations such as Italy and Germany.

Hiddink is, at the very least, single-minded. The team that defeated the Republic of Ireland 2-0 was almost entirely composed of players who are presently with Ajax or, like Dennis Bergkamp and Clarence Seedorf, were raised there before moving abroad. Not one member of the side came from another Dutch club.

This Ajax emphasis is bound to prove exasperating to some people in Holland. It must seem odd, for instance, that PSV Eindhoven can be making such a strong challenge for the Dutch league title, yet not have a single player in the Holland team. For their own part, Ajax too are troubled by the heavy demands being placed on their men.

To Hiddink, though, the advantages are clear. The Ajax link gives him a team completely at ease with one tactical system that is also amassing experience with its triumphs in the European Cup. The temptation to pick such footballers *en masse* is strong and the manager has hardly attempted to resist it.

His decision provided an uncomplicated solution to the problem created by the departure from international football of, in quick succession, Ruud Gullit, Marco Van Basten, Frank Rijkaard, Ronald Koeman and Jan Wouters. Hiddink is left with a team that is precocious, even if it lacks experience of international football. At 34, Danny Blind is the only member of the side who can be termed a veteran.

The freshness is appealing and the Crown Prince Willem Alexander was eager to be photographed at Anfield draped in the Dutch flag, as he embraced Patrick Kluivert. As Hiddink appreciated, however, the joy of that moment will not sustain Holland for long, and there are worries ahead. The trial of Kluivert, scheduled for May, following the death of a famous theatre director in a car crash, is only the most obvious example.

In football terms, Hiddink must concern himself with replacing Marc Overmars, whose injury is likely to keep him out of the European Championship, and also

fret over the condition of the Ajax players at the end of an exhausting season. Holland deserve to be among the favourites in England, but not even they are not exempted from anxiety.

SWITZERLAND

Despite its reputation for serenity, learning to fear Switzerland has been easy for the football nations of the world. Under Englishman, Roy Hodgson, the country reached the finals of the World Cup, at Scotland's expense, for the first time in 28 years and then swept through the qualifiers to take its place at Euro '96.

Hodgson became a hero through that transformation of fortune and his sacking, when the Swiss FA decided he could not carry out the job at the same time as managing Inter Milan, provoked dismay among the public. Without belittling Hodgson's feats, however, it should be said that he had the good fortune to be in charge in an era when a formidable group of players was emerging.

While he is gone, they most certainly remain. Indeed, this may be the first occasion Switzerland have possessed a batch of footballers whose names would win a nod of recognition across Europe. Stephane Chapuisat, of Borussia Dortmund, even has people in Scotland shaking their heads in sorrow at the damage he has done to our teams in club and international competition.

His fitness is still in doubt at present, as he toils to complete a recovery from a knee injury suffered more than a year ago, but Switzerland are, in any case, not utterly dependent on him. Although Chapuisat may be a figurehead, he is just one of a number of players accomplished enough to make careers for themselves abroad.

Typically, the Swiss national team might feature only four players at Swiss clubs. Marc Hottiger, the right-back is now with Everton, while one midfielder, Christophe Ohrel, plays for St Etienne in France. The experienced Thomas Bickel left Grasshoppers Zurich for Vissel Kobe, in Japan's J League, last summer. The core of the side, however, have taken the same route as Chapuisat, creating a German-based contingent of five players.

Adrian Knup initially signed for VfB Stuttgart and was later transferred to Karlsruhe. The forward's career has been uneven in the Bundesliga, but his consistency at international level, where he averages better than a goal every two games, is extraordinary. Alain Sutter's experiences have been similar. While the winger made little impression with Bayern Munich, and was sold to Freiburg, his importance to Switzerland has never waned.

Stephane Henchoz, of SV Hamburg, represents the younger generation and the 21-year-old brims with the self-belief that has seen him replace the experienced Dominique Herr at centre-back. Currently, though, the most prominent of the Bundesliga men is Ciriaco Sforza, who has dominated in the Bayern Munich midfield, following a £3.5 million transfer from Kaiserslautern.

Club football in Switzerland is inevitably weakened by the loss of such men, but some of those who remain at home do continue to be influential. Alain Geiger, with 111 appearances, is closing in on the record total of 117 caps, held by Heinz Hermann. Although he is 35, Geiger should survive long enough in the team to set a new benchmark. Intelligence continues to make him a highly effective sweeper, even if his pace has diminished.

The squad's worth was sufficiently clear to ensure that several distinguished coaches were interested in the vacancy when the Swiss FA dismissed Hodgson just before Christmas. The man who eventually got the job, the Portuguese manager, Artur Jorge, takes pride in the fact that he was preferred to contenders such as Sven-Goran Eriksson of Sampdoria.

Stephane Chapuisat – damaging Scottish teams

None the less, any application form completed by Jorge would make for formidable reading. In his homeland, he had spells managing Porto (with whom he won the 1987 European Cup), Benfica and the Portuguese national team. In France, he was instrumental in developing the highly entertaining Paris Saint-Germain side that featured George Weah and David Ginola.

The duties of the Switzerland manager are always said to be hideously complex, since the country is composed of German, Italian and French speakers, but Jorge seems qualified to deal with the demands. He is a linguist, with a particular affection for French, who also holds two doctorates.

Neither he nor his team will feel out of place in the cosmopolitan surroundings of the European Championship.

KEVIN McCARRA
(Sunday Times)

SCOTLAND

Scott BOOTH	–	*Aberdeen*
Tom BOYD	–	*Celtic*
Craig BURLEY	–	*Chelsea*
John COLLINS	–	*Celtic*
Kevin GALLACHER	–	*Blackburn Rovers*
Scot GEMMILL	–	*Nottingham Forest*
Colin HENDRY	–	*Blackburn Rovers*
Darren JACKSON	–	*Hibernian*
Eoin JESS	–	*Coventry City*
Jim LEIGHTON	–	*Hibernian*
Gary McALLISTER	–	*Leeds United*
Ally McCOIST	–	*Rangers*
Billy McKINLAY	–	*Blackburn Rovers*
Paul McSTAY	–	*Celtic*
Pat NEVIN	–	*Tranmere Rovers*
Brian O'NEIL	–	*Celtic*
John SPENCER	–	*Chelsea*
Nicky WALKER	–	*Partick Thistle*

- The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association will provide the pre-match and interval entertainment.

- Spectators are urged to exercise the utmost care when leaving the ground, particularly in staircase areas. Their doing so will reduce to a minimum the risk of accident. We ask you to pay particular attention to this notice.

Referee: Mr Herman Van Dijk (The Netherlands) Linesmen: Mr Dick Van Egmond and

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AUSTRALIA

Steve HORVAT	– *Hajduk Split*	
Mark BOSNICH	– *Aston Villa*	
Zeljko KALAC	– *Wolverhampton Wanderers*	
Steve CORICA	– *Wolverhampton Wanderers*	
Jason VAN BLERK	– *Millwall*	
Sean MURPHY	– *Notts County*	
Andrew BERNAL	– *Reading*	
Carl VEART	– *Sheffield United*	
Robbie SLATER	– *West Ham United*	
Ned ZELIC	– *Eintracht Frankfurt*	
Tony VIDMAR	– *NAC Breda*	
Graham ARNOLD	– *NAC Breda*	
Aurelio VIDMAR	– *FC Sion*	
George KULSCAR	– *Antwerp*	
Tony POPOVIC	– *Sydney United*	
Danny TIATTO	– *Melbourne Knights*	
Alex TOBIN	– *Adelaide City*	

- First aid duties at tonight's match are kindly carried out by the St. Andrew's Ambulance Association.

- Tonight's match ball, the Umbro Elite Supreme Ceramica, is supplied by Umbro International Ltd., official suppliers to The Scottish Football Association.

- Smoking is prohibited within the seated area of the South Stand.

Berend Talens (both of The Netherlands) Fourth Official: Mr George Clyde (Scotland)

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The 'Socceroos' – a team on the up and up

It says everything about the progress made by Australia at soccer that the team who line-up against Scotland will be almost entirely European-based. Long gone are the days when Australia picked a domestic-based team. Now any leading Australian player is snapped up to play abroad – usually in Europe.

At least half the squad selected by coach, Eddie Thomson, for this trip play in England and Scotland.

Scottish-born Thomson, who played for Hearts and Aberdeen, has gone on record as saying he is confident he has enough talent at his disposal to win at Hampden. The only players still playing their club football in Australia are Tony Popovic of Sydney United and Alex Tobin of Adelaide City.

Branco Culina, Popovic's coach at Sydney, says: "Tony is the best young player in Australia at the present time. He has attracted a lot of international attention. It was only a matter of time before a European club stepped in for him. You could say he will be in the shop window against Scotland."

Thomson does not believe, however, that Australia are something of a one-man band. He says: "On paper we have a very strong line-up and barring injury, I think the Scots will be in for a very hard time of it. We are not considering this as a friendly match.

"There is a lot of pride at stake and we'll be going out there to win." His only regret is the absence of top-ranked sweeper, Paul Okon, who was injured recently playing for his Belgian club, Brugge.

Okon was top-rated foreign footballer in Belgium last year – his success a product of the Australian FA's work over the past decade to build-up both domestic club competition as well as Australia's ability to cope at national team level.

Australia's appearance at the 1974 World Cup finals (grouped with Chile plus East and West Germany) was the high point of their international development, so far.

Soccer in Australia is fighting to gain popularity and profile against cricket, rugby and Australian rules. It was very much a minority sport and one whose 'national' status took time to develop. Traditionally, the clubs have drawn their support from ethnic Greek, Italian and former Yugoslav nations. Club titles such as Sydney Olympic and Sydney Croatia surely tell their own story.

The progress made by Australia tells its own story. The national team dominate the Oceania Confederation of FIFA and had hoped – in vain – for a guaranteed place of their own at the next World Cup. This was not to be, despite the increase in the number to 32.

To try to enhance the game's image and popularity at home, the FA has invested heavily in the Socceroos – the national team. But Australia also keep their Youth age-group teams together and play many matches at all levels, including unofficial internationals, such as the one against a Scotland XI on May 28, 1967. Australia tried to force the play throughout the 90 minutes, but were beaten by a goal in the 31st minute . . . scored by a certain Alex Ferguson, now manager of Manchester United.

Carl Veart

Jason Van Blerk

THE COACH

Eddie THOMSON. Aged 49 (born February 25, 1947). Scottish by birth, but now an adopted Australian. Thomson was a Scotland Under-23 international who played eight years with Hearts and four with Aberdeen. He had one year in the North American Soccer League with San Antonio Thunder and a further three years with Sydney City before building an even more notable career as a coach. Thomson won every honour in Australian soccer during his seven years guiding Sydney City. He also took Sydney Olympic to the Australian grand finals once, before becoming national coach five years ago, in succession to Frank Arok. Thomson, who guided Australia to the semi-finals of the last Olympic Games in Barcelona, is a FIFA coach and holds the Scottish FA full coaching badge.

Thomson's assistant is **Les SCHEINFLUG** (born October 1, 1938), former international defender with 11 caps. Scheinflug not only captained Australia in their first World Cup tie against North Korea in the qualifiers in 1965, but celebrated the occasion by scoring Australia's first-ever World Cup goal.

THE SQUAD

Zeljko KALAC. *Goalkeeper.* Aged 23 (born December 16, 1972) with 15 caps. Wolverhampton Wanderers. Nicknamed the 'Spider' but has been trapped in a confused transfer web since deciding to try his luck in English football. Kalac made his debut for Australia in 1992 against Malaysia. His international honours include a penalty save from French skipper, Jean-Pierre Papin in the Kirin Cup in Japan in 1994. Kalac was duly voted Goalkeeper of the Year in 1993-94 and 1994-95 in Australia when Mark McGhee signed him for Leicester City for an Australian record £850,000. But he played only twice for Leicester before McGhee left for Wolves. When McGhee returned to Leicester for Kalac, the deal very nearly foundered over work permit problems.

Mark Bosnich

Mark BOSNICH. *Goalkeeper.* Aged 24 (born January 13, 1972) with three caps. Aston Villa. Bosnich is one of the superstars of Australian soccer even though he boasts only a handful of senior international appearances. He made his name in England originally as a hugely-promising reserve at Manchester United – who were none too pleased when Bosnich, after a spell back home, returned to England with Villa.

Tony POPOVIC. *Defender.* Aged 22 (born July 4, 1973) with 12 caps. Sydney United. Popovic is one of only two Aussie-based players selected for the Scotland trip. Likelihood is that he, too, will soon be a regular in European league football. Popovic, who can play sweeper, stopper or midfield, has played for Australia at Youth, Under-20 and Olympic level at the last Games in Barcelona. He is high on the wanted list of clubs in Belgium and Germany, as well as in England where he is interesting Wolves in particular.

Tony VIDMAR. *Defender.* Aged 25 (born July 4, 1970) with 23 caps (one goal). NAC Breda (Holland). Vidmar was a member of the Australian team which came within inches of a place at the 1994 World Cup finals and also in the Socceroo side, which finished fourth at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. Made his name down-under with Adelaide City before moving to Europe with Belgian club Germinal Ekeren. Vidmar's elder brother, Aurelio, is also an international in the squad.

Steve HORVAT. *Defender.* Aged 25 (born March 14, 1971) with six caps. Hajduk Split (Croatia). Horvat reversed the general trend when he moved to, rather than from, the top Croatian club, Hajduk. Horvat played for Australia under Thomson at Youth level, but his subsequent progress was upset by injury problems. Finally, he established himself at the heart of the defence for Melbourne Knights. He helped them win the Australian Grand Final last year before moving to Europe.

Jason VAN BLERK. *Defender.* Aged 28 (born March 16, 1968) with 22 caps (one goal). Millwall. Van Blerk is one member of a highly-varied international brigade at Millwall which includes United States goalkeeper, Kasey Keller and Russia's prospective Euro '96 heroes, Vassili Kulkov and Sergei Yuran. Van Blerk's father, Cliff, played 16 times for Australia. Son, Jason, is generally seen at his best on the left of defence where he loves to roam forward in support of the attack. Joined Millwall from Go Ahead Eagles of Deventer, Holland, two years ago. His experience will be all the more important since injury may rule Rangers' Craig Moore out of the Socceroos' squad.

Ned ZELIC. *Sweeper or midfield.* Aged 24 (born July 4, 1971) with 18 caps (one goal). Eintracht Frankfurt (Germany). Zelic was the

key figure in Australia's success in the 1992 Olympic Games. They defeated Holland in a dramatic play-off in the qualifiers – Zelic scoring the decisive goal – then reached the semi-finals in Barcelona. Borussia Dortmund beat off heavy competition and Zelic helped them win the German championship last season. A £1 million transfer to London club, Queens Park Rangers proved a disappointment and he returned to Germany in mid-season with Eintracht Frankfurt. Zelic has been selected in a World XI squad to play Brazil, in a charity match, in New York in July.

Sean MURPHY. *Defender.* Aged 25 (born November 5, 1970) with no caps as yet. Notts County. Murphy, originally from Perth in Western Australia, played for Blacktown City in the National League and then for Perth Italia, before starring for Australia at the 1992 Olympic Games, A graduate of the much-admired Australian Institute of Sport, he joined Notts County three years ago.

George KULSCAR. *Defender.* Aged 28 (born August 12, 1967) with no caps as yet. Antwerp (Belgium). Kulscar was brought up in Canberra where he started his top-level career with the Canberra Arrows. He enrolled in the noted Australian Institute of Sport in 1983, before making his name with National League club, St George. He played for Australia at the World Youth Cup finals in Chile in 1987 and transferred to Belgian football in 1989.

Steve CORICA. *Midfield.* Aged 23 (born March 24, 1973) with ten caps (two goals). Wolverhampton Wanderers. One of the most exciting of the new generation of Socceroos. Corica hails from Innisfail in Far North Queensland. He played for his State youth team and then graduated, via Australian Schoolboys, Youth and Olympic ranks, to senior ranks. Corica starred in the Marconi-Fairfield team which won the Grand Final in 1993 when he was also voted Young Player of the Year. He transferred to Leicester City last year, then cost Wolves around £1 million, earlier this spring.

Andrew BERNAL. *Midfield.* Aged 29 (born May 16, 1966) with 12 caps. Reading. Bernal has had a varied career, moving around between Australia, Spain and England, which helps to explain why he has not totted-up more senior international appearances. Bernal won the Aussie Cup with UTS Olympic and captained the national youth team in 1985. He played against some of the greatest names in the game while with Sporting Gijon of Spain. A spell with Ipswich Town was followed by a return to Sydney Olympic, then a dash back to England to join Reading two years ago. Bernal was a member of the Reading team who lost a promotion play-off to Bolton, in dramatic circumstances, at Wembley in May last year.

Robbie SLATER. *Forward.* Aged 31 (born November 22, 1964) with 16 caps. West Ham United. Slater has, at last, returned to regular duty for Australia. A former Oceania Footballer of the Year, he starred in the 1994 World Cup qualifying bid and was singled-out for praise by none other than Diego Maradona, after Australia's unsuccessful play-off challenge to Argentina. Born in Ormskirk, Slater played in France with Lens, before moving to England with first, Blackburn – with whom he won the Premiership last season – and now West Ham United.

Carl VEART. *Forward.* Aged 25 (born May 21, 1970) with 13 caps (six goals). Crystal Palace. Veart would like few things better in soccer than to see Crystal Palace regain their place in the English

Graham Arnold

Premiership as soon as possible. Veart made his name with Adelaide City before joining Sheffield United's 'Blades' in England. He scored ten goals in 39 games last season before transferring south to Selhurst Park.

Aurelio VIDMAR. *Forward.* Aged 29 (born February 3, 1967) with 18 caps (four goals). FC Sion (Switzerland). Vidmar, whose younger brother, Tony, is a defender in this squad, was 22-goal top scorer in the Belgian league last season. Those goals encouraged spy visits on behalf of clubs all over Europe. In the end, Vidmar settled for Sion in Switzerland. His twin ambitions are to play, one day, in Italy as well as to be honoured as national team captain.

Graham ARNOLD. *Striker.* Aged 32 (born August 3, 1963) with 48 caps (16 goals). NAC Breda (Holland). National team captain. Arnold has been a key member of the Socceroos' national squad since his first call-up 11 years ago. Made his name originally with Sydney Croatia and was brought to Europe by Dutch club, Roda, then played in Belgium with FC Liege and Charleroi before returning to Holland and Breda.

KEIR RADNEDGE

Scotland v San Marino
15th November, 1995

Billy McKinlay strides forward

Colin Calderwood heads clear

Scott Booth scores

Pat Nevin jinks past a defender

Eoin Jess celebrates his goal

Ally McCoist – another celebration

Gary McAllister

The Captain's View

Gary McAllister has two dreams for Euro '96 – one is the kind that only really turns up in fairytales, the other is a bit more realistic.

In the first vision the Scotland skipper has, he sees himself going up the famous steps at Wembley to collect the European Championship trophy on June 30.

"That's a very nice thought," he admits.

But the second, slightly less ambitious one, simply sees the Scots get through the qualifying section that includes England, Holland and Switzerland.

And that would be no mean achievement either.

Gary insisted: "Getting to the second phase of the competition would be a tremendous effort because, after all, no Scotland side has EVER done that.

"We have tried often enough in the World Cup particularly and in this tournament, four years ago in Sweden, and every time we have failed to negotiate the first hurdle.

"I know it's an achievement in itself for a nation our size to even get to the finals of these competitions, but I'm ambitious enough to want more.

"And I would love to be the first captain to help Scotland into the next stage.

"I also happen to believe we can do just that this time. There's no point of making false promises and saying we WILL do it, but I certainly believe we CAN get there."

McAllister's optimism is based on a qualifying section that took us proudly to England in the first place.

Scotland, to be fair, were deemed to have a chance at the outset when we were put in a group that included Russia, Greece, Finland, the Faroe Islands and San Marino.

But really, there was no right for the wave of euphoria that greeted that draw because Russia and Greece, especially, are formidable opponents and Finland, as they proved, were eminently capable of doing some damage of their own.

Still, the Scots got off to the best possible start with a win in Finland way back in September, 1994.

"It was exactly what we wanted," admitted McAllister. "The first game in any tournament like this is vital, because it can give you an immediate boost if you win yet, on the other hand, can leave you a mountain to climb if you get beaten.

"So we knew the importance of going to Helsinki in the opener and although they fancied their chances, goals from Duncan Shearer and John Collins rocked them good and proper.

"The one other thing a solid start like that does is make the other countries sit up and take note, and there's no doubt both Russia and Greece would have been a bit startled by our comfortable victory."

So the first hurdle on the long, tortuous road to England had been safely negotiated and the second, a convincing 5-1 win over the Faroes, without McAllister, left us looking good.

"But it was always going to be the Russians who represented the main threat," went on Gary, "And so it proved.

"They came to Glasgow in the third match and looked a useful side in the 1-1 draw. That was in some ways a setback because it really is so important to win your home games, but in another way it was a good point against the group favourites.

"The big blow came when we went to Athens just before that

Christmas and an early, disputed penalty gave them victory. That was a sore one and set us back.

"It also came at a particularly bad time because we knew we had to go to Moscow for the next match and that was clearly going to be a very difficult one.

"In fact, looking back, the away game against Russia was probably the one that saved the section for us.

"We simply HAD to take something from that game and we did, courtesy of a 0-0 draw which really was a tremendous achievement, and gave us all a huge lift."

Boss, Craig Brown, immediately set his squad a five-wins-from-the-last-five games target to qualify for Euro '96 and away victories over San Marino and the Faroes followed to make it two down with three to go.

"That meant Greece, at home, became the next big one and, again, we knew that only really three points would do," went on the skipper.

"It was all a bit fraught that night, but we made it thanks to a lucky deflection off Ally McCoist's head!

"That set us up for the visit of Finland and although we scored early on through Scott Booth and should have settled better, they made it very difficult right to the end of our 1-0 win.

"And that, more or less, was that, because there was no way we were going to let San Marino stand between us and a place in England. I know how contrary and inconsistent the international side can be because we have a history of failing to sides we should be able to see off comfortably, but there was no way it was going to happen then.

"And we won 5-0, to leave us second in the table behind Russia, but five points ahead of the fancied Greeks.

"It was a terrific effort from Craig Brown and Alex Miller, through the backroom staff and all the way through the squad because it was very much a team effort."

And that is precisely what the Scots will rely heavily on again this summer.

Tonight's game against Australia will be followed by a trip to Copenhagen to meet Denmark in full and 'B' internationals next month, and then a two-game sojourn to America, and all the while that squad spirit will, hopefully, improve.

And although the Stateside visit in May has met with some comment already, you won't find the captain among the doubters.

McAllister insisted: "It's a good idea. We went there before Sweden in '92 and it proved to be a great exercise.

"There isn't enormous pressure and there will be a chance for the lads to get away from it all a bit, even though there will be two important warm-up games.

"The same kind of thing worked a treat before Sweden and I see no reason why it won't work again this time, before we get down to the very serious business of producing the goods down south."

Scotland, of course, already know what is ahead in England, with Holland, the host country and then Switzerland lying in wait.

But the prospect fills McAllister more with determination than doubt, hope rather than horror and anticipation rather than anguish.

"This is the kind of stage you dream about being on," he said frankly. "It is a chance to pit your wits against some of the best teams in the world in front of millions of people.

"And being Scottish, the chance to do your bit so close to home in a major tournament is probably a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"Honestly, if you can't get excited at that prospect then you're in the wrong job. Personally, I can't wait."

GRAHAM CLARK
(Scottish Daily Record)

Gary McAllister congratulates goal scorer, Scott Booth, against Finland

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The World Cup '98 – and Scotland

Michel Platini

The splendour of the Carrousel du Louvre in Paris was the launch pad for the 1998 World Cup finals . . . and the French intend to make it the biggest and best of the century.

This, the 16th Football World Cup and the last before the millennium, will have 32 teams competing, will attract 2.5 million spectators at the ten venues with an estimated total of 37 billion television viewers. In the words of the legendary Michel Platini, joint president of France '98, this will be the "greatest event in world sport."

The organisers are certainly taking the game to the people with a new look to the finals. For the first time ever, each participating nation will play its first three qualifying matches in three different stadiums.

In addition, each city will have at least one second-round match and a quarter-final tie to guarantee top variety and high-quality football for everyone. In this way, the public of the host city will be able to watch nine to twelve teams play, including two of the eight best teams in the world.

Incredibly, 172 countries, a record in itself, have entered the preliminary rounds which will take place between March this year and November 1997 on all continents with 32 taking their place eventually in the finals, between June 10 and July 12, 1998.

The cost of staging this event is quite staggering and this initial expenditure alone has been set at 1,555 billion francs in their bid to outdo the United States of America in terms of universal appeal.

There are ten World Cup cities – Bordeaux, Lens, Lyon, Marseille, Montpellier, Nantes, Paris, Saint-Denis, Saint-Etienne and Toulouse.

Already, plans have been laid to make every venue all-seater and, in many cases, this will result in capacity reductions.

The biggest project of all is the construction of the Grand Stadium in Saint-Denis – a four-tier arena which will have an all-seated capacity of 80,000 for football. However, such is the design that the seating facility can be altered for various sporting events – 75,000 for athletics and up to 103,000 for pop concerts.

To whet your appetite here is an update on the World Cup venues:

BORDEAUX: The Parc Lescure Stadium will have its present capacity of 46,990 reduced to 36,500 with 15,000 seats under cover.

LENS: The Felix Bollaert Stadium is another near 50,000 venue but the modifications to make it all-seated will bring it down to 40,000.

LYON: The Gerland Stadium in France's second-largest city will be thoroughly refurbished to provide a capacity of 44,000 with the north corner being covered and moved nearer the playing surface.

MARSEILLE: The famous Velodrome Stadium is undergoing a major transformation and will eventually see its capacity substantially increased from 46,000 to 60,000.

MONTPELLIER: A new seated area is being constructed on the south side of the La Mosson Stadium to increase the capacity from 23,500 to 35,500.

NANTES: The changes to the Beaujovre Stadium will reduce crowd limits at the venue from 52,000 to 40,000.

PARIS: The famous home of French football the Parc de Princes, also the base of Paris St Germain, will have a crowd limit of 48,725.

SAINT ETIENNE: Major redevelopments at the Geoffroy Guichard Stadium where it will be converted into a 36,000 capacity venue.

TOULOUSE: New tiers will be added to the Municipal Stadium in this academic and industrial metropolis of the south west, the fourth-largest city in France, to give a total capacity of 37,000 – 2,000 more than at present.

That is the scene setter and that is where Craig Brown and the Scotland national team, and our visitors Australia want to be in 1998, after missing out on the last World Cup finals in America two years ago.

That was a huge disappointment to Scotland, the first time we have failed to qualify since 1974. While winning our way into the finals of the European Championships, this summer, in England for only the second time was a superb achievement, playing on the world stage is the thing for footballers from every corner of the globe.

The Scotland squad will open their World Cup campaign in a matter of weeks after the conclusion of Euro '96 at Wembley . . . the opening tie being against Austria in Vienna on Saturday, August 31.

Group 4 may lack the glamour of others, but the bid for qualification is going to be very demanding for, this time around, only the nation that tops each section will automatically qualify for France '98 as well as the best placed runner-up.

The other eight will then have to go through a play-off – two-legged confrontations with the winning four going to the finals.

It's a tough schedule, for Scotland have to play ten matches in their Group Sweden, Latvia, Belarus and Estonia being the other competitors in addition to Austria.

Indeed, the mere fact that Scotland open up on a Saturday in Vienna is the forerunner of a major timetable switch when it comes to international matches as we fast approach the millennium. The traditional Wednesday night occasion for national action is on the way out as the importance of international football gains new significance in the sporting calendar.

Not only are Scotland involved in Saturday or Sunday action, they will also play double-headers both home and away . . . successive internationals within the space of five days.

Scotland team manager, Craig Brown, welcomes this switch as he declared: "This new approach gives us more time to prepare ourselves properly, is good for the players and just as beneficial for their clubs.

"We will need all the time we can get for these World Cup qualifiers for we are against, in Sweden, one of the best teams in world football, as their performances in America two years ago proved.

"They will be even more dangerous after they failed to qualify for the finals of Euro '96, one of the biggest surprises of the European Championships."

He added: "We also have the worry of stepping into the World Cup unknown in being paired with the likes of Latvia and Belarus, two new soccer nations emerging from the break-up of the former Soviet Union.

"The one thing we will not be doing is writing them off in any shape or form. We have a lot of homework to do on them, they are still very much an unknown quantity at international level. But I already know, from trips into Eastern Europe, that they do have players of very good technical ability."

Already, the Scottish management team have had their first look at Belarus. Frank Coulston watched them in action as they went down 3-2 to Turkey, two penalty kicks for the home side helping their cause in front of a huge crowd.

Next on the agenda is Latvia and the Scots team boss is calling on the

Tomas Brolin

John McGinlay

Bryan Hamilton

help of his Northern Ireland counterpart, Bryan Hamilton, whose national team faced the Latvians in the European Championships qualification rounds.

The other Baltic state, Estonia, is, of course, well known to the Scots having played them soon after they were accepted into membership by FIFA, the world governing body.

The Scots defeated them twice in the last World Cup campaign. The bulk of their players come from the club, FC Flora, in the capital city of Tallinn. This is a comparatively young side for international football, where their goalkeeper, Mart Poom, has emerged as a useful Number 1, with Marke Kristal one of their best outfield talents.

Austria, in recent times, have not had the marked success they once enjoyed at this level and the Scots defeated them in Vienna in 1994 in a friendly, John McGinlay scoring one of the goals on his international debut.

On the other hand, Sweden, victors over the Scots in a friendly last year, finished as third top in the 1994 World Cup but, to the surprise of many, had a miserable European Championship.

Tomas Brolin is still very much their pin-up boy and he has now linked up with the Scots captain, Gary McAllister, at Leeds United this season after a big money transfer from Parma. For years, Thomas Ravelli, capped more than 120 times after his debut against Finland 15 years ago, has been their extrovert goalkeeper, while Kennet Andersson, playing in Italy with Bari, is a major threat up front in a squad full of quality players . . . and anxious to restore national pride in the forthcoming World Cup.

JIM McLEAN
(Scottish Daily Express)

World Cup Schedule for Scotland

1996

August	31	–	Austria	v	Scotland
October	5	–	Latvia	v	Scotland
October	9	–	Estonia	v	Scotland
November	10	–	Scotland	v	Sweden

1997

March	29	–	Scotland	v	Estonia
April	2	–	Scotland	v	Austria
April	30	–	Sweden	v	Scotland
June	8	–	Belarus	v	Scotland
September	6	–	Scotland	v	Belarus
October	11	–	Scotland	v	Latvia

WORLD CUP DRAW

GROUP 1
Denmark
Greece
Croatia
Slovenia
Bosnia – Herzegovina

GROUP 2
Italy
ENGLAND
Poland
Georgia
Moldova

GROUP 3
Norway
Switzerland
Finland
Hungary
Azerbaijan

GROUP 4
Sweden
SCOTLAND
Austria
Latvia
Belarus
Estonia

GROUP 5
Russia
Bulgaria
Israel
Cyprus
Luxemburg

GROUP 6
Spain
Czech Republic
Slovakia
Yugoslavia
Malta
Faroe Islands

GROUP 7
Holland
Belgium
Turkey
WALES
San Marino

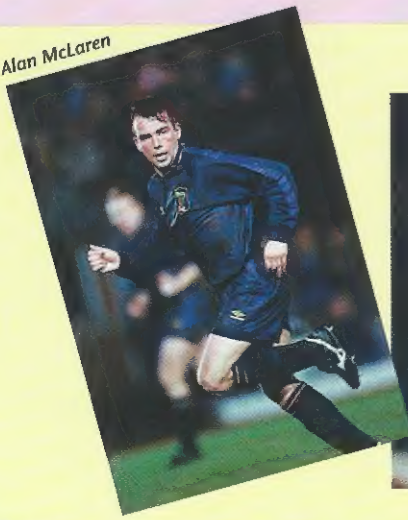
GROUP 8
Romania
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
Lithuania
Iceland
Macedonia
Liechtenstein

GROUP 9
Germany
Portugal
NORTHERN IRELAND
Ukraine
Albania
Armenia

SCOTLAND

Players		Caps	Goals	D.O.B.
Scott Booth	Aberdeen	9	5	16.12.71
Tom Boyd	Celtic	31	–	24.11.65
Craig Burley	Chelsea	5	–	24.09.71
John Collins	Celtic	29	8	31.01.68
Kevin Gallacher	Blackburn Rovers	19	2	23.11.66
Scot Gemmill	Nottingham Forest	4	–	02.01.71
Colin Hendry	Blackburn Rovers	14	1	07.12.65
Darren Jackson	Hibernian	9	–	25.07.66
Eoin Jess	Coventry City	10	1	13.12.70
Jim Leighton	Hibernian	71	–	24.07.58
Gary McAllister	Leeds United	37	4	25.12.64
Ally McCoist	Rangers	49	17	24.09.62
Billy McKinlay	Blackburn Rovers	15	4	22.04.69
Paul McStay	Celtic	72	9	22.10.64
Pat Nevin	Tranmere Rovers	27	5	06.09.63
Brian O'Neil	Celtic	–	–	06.09.72
John Spencer	Chelsea	5	–	11.09.70
Nicky Walker	Partick Thistle	1	–	29.09.62

Alan McLaren



Colin Hendry

Paul McStay

SCOTTISH FOOTBALL SAYS NO TO DRUGS

"The Scottish Football Association, like UEFA and FIFA believes in the principle of natural fitness and Fair Play in all aspects of football. The Association condemns the use of drugs by participants to enhance performance. No player, trainer, coach, manager, official, physiotherapist nor doctor should engage in doping practices. All players participating in football may at any time be subject to a drug test. If a positive test for drugs was found, the player and others who are knowingly involved in assisting such practice are liable to disciplinary action which could be severe and have long term implications."

BANNED DRUGS IN FOOTBALL

- **STIMULANTS** eg amphetamine, cocaine, ephedrine, and related compounds.
- **NARCOTIC ANALGESICS** eg morphine, pethidine and related compounds.
- **ANABOLIC STEROIDS** eg nandrolone, stanozolol, testosterone and related compounds.
- **DIURETICS** eg frusemide, hydrochlorothiazide, triamterene and related products.
- **PEPTIDE HORMONES & ANALOGUES** eg growth hormone, HCG, EPO.
- **BLOOD DOPING** including Erythropoietin (EPO).
- **PHARMACOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL & PHYSICAL MANIPULATION**

These drugs and methods are on the prohibited list of the International Olympic Committee, UEFA and FIFA.

EVERYDAY GUIDELINES

ALWAYS CHECK WITH THE CHEMIST OR DOCTOR THE CONTENT OF YOUR MEDICINE.
ACCEPTABLE EVERYDAY TREATMENT GUIDELINES INCLUDE:

- **COLDS** - aspirin, paracetamol, steam and menthol inhalant and antibiotics.
- **COUGHS** - menthol inhalants, Cophelco, Benylin chesty cough only NOT other Benylins.
- **HEADACHE** - and other pain - paracetamol and aspirin.
- **SORE THROATS** - TCP, paracetamol or soluble aspirin.
- **INDIGESTION/NAUSEA** - antacids, Maxolon, Stemetil and Motilium.
- **DIARRHOEA** - Kaopectate, Lomotil, Dioralyte and fluid replacement.
- **ASTHMA, HAYFEVER** - Intal, Ventolin, Beconase and Otrivine, (inhalation only).
- **ALLERGIES/INSECT BITES** - Antihistamines, Piriton.
- **TRAVEL SICKNESS** - Antihistamines, Stugeron and Sea-Legs.

WARNING

SOME EVERYDAY REMEDIES MAY CONTAIN STIMULANTS OR OTHER BANNED SUBSTANCES.
IF YOU ARE BUYING SOMETHING OVER THE COUNTER AT A CHEMIST ALWAYS CHECK THE CONTENTS
AVOID UNKNOWN HERBAL MEDICINES IF THE CONTENTS ARE NOT SPECIFIED.

THE SCOTTISH SPORTS COUNCIL
'DEVELOPING SPORT IN SCOTLAND'

Further information can be obtained from The Scottish Sports Council, Caledonia House, South Gyle, Edinburgh EH12 9DQ. Telephone:031-317 7200.

"I do love a lie-in on a Sunday."

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